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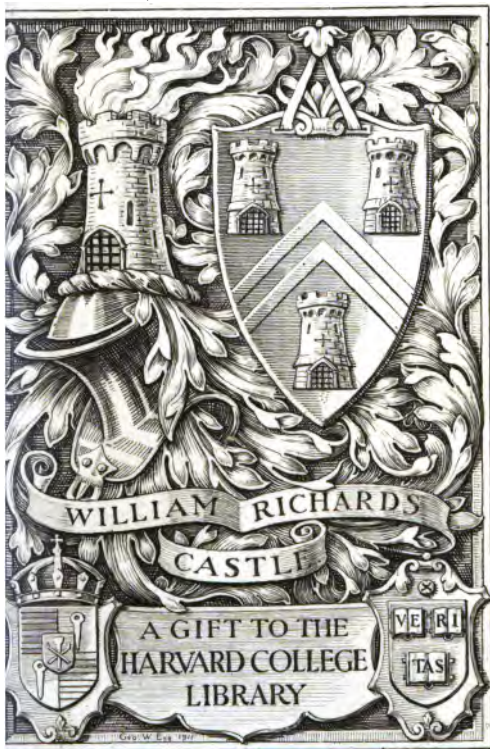
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T. W. H. CROSLAND

LONDON

AT THE SIGN OF THE UNICORN



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# The Finer Spirit

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By T. W. H. Crosland

*Author of Literary Parables*

*Other People's Wings*

*Fifty Fables*

*&c.*

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*To*  
**WILLIAM CROSLAND**

# The Finer Spirit

## I.

I SAW the painted worlds go by,  
And wonder'd what great good could lie  
Beneath that dreadful pageantry.

What lamp of excellent brimming light  
Hath kept the immemorial night,  
And watches on, in Time's despite?

What soul of saving sweetness lends  
The affable touch to things, and blends  
That which begins and that which ends?

## II.

And one, whose look shone kindness, ran  
And fetch'd his sheaf of charts—the plan  
Mark'd out, he said, by God for Man.

‘Look thou! Thus far, and thus, the clear  
Seas sparkle; thou may'st pray, and steer  
Thy craft with knowledge here, and here;

‘But by the vasty marges loom  
God's well-set darknesses; the womb  
Bears not the man that skills this gloom.’

### **III.**

**Another, wisely, ' We are sure  
Of consciousness and some small store  
Of facts, as "two and two make four."**

**' So nerved and lamp'd may Reason spell  
The systems out, and learn to tell  
The purport of the inmost cell ;**

**' But, ever as she goes, she sees  
In new and old simplicities  
The old, invincible mysteries.'**



#### IV.

Also another, 'Wine and wheat  
And oil have we, and liberal heat  
Of punctual suns ; our pulses beat

'With warmth and warm affections—Love  
The chief—and like a blessed dove  
Joy winnows round us as we move ;

'And solace cometh with the stroke,  
And strength to render dear the yoke—  
These are enough for honest folk.'

V.

Yet who, that waits for happier skies,  
Or searches with assiduous eyes,  
Or dreams among the butterflies,

Hath never felt the effulgence fall  
From off the front of things, and all  
The sweetness sicken into gall ?

Hath never heard the implacable blast  
Crying afar through void and vast,  
And stood up shuddering and aghast ?

## VI.

Yon planet, set out lustrously  
Upon the tinted dawn, may be  
Some dull immutable agony,

Heavy with hideousness and fell  
And terrible tribes that quake and yell  
For ever on the slags of hell ;

Creatures to whom death is a vain  
Vague legend of the prime, ere pain  
Bore down and smote them heart and brain.

## VII.

And this dear earth of green and grey  
And gold and blue—our broad highway  
And pleasant inn whereat we stay

As travellers lighted luckily  
On goodly cheer and company  
And chambers lavendered—may be

Out of the placid ages come  
With all its load of life and bloom  
Jump to the verge of some wild doom.—

## VIII.

She called to me across the flood  
Of finish'd years, ' Believe thy blood  
Which runs a living faith in good !'

She called to me out of the still  
And molten noon, ' Believe thy will  
Which, having force, would banish ill !'

She called to me out of the day  
Next to be born, ' Believe the clay  
Which sends up goodness from decay !'

## IX.

' Here is the earnest to make whole  
The parted circlet of the soul,  
To crown thy mirth and star thy dole ;

' Here is the essence that hath kept  
The centuries sweet, and raced and leapt  
In veins that wither'd, eyes that wept ;

' Here is the jewel for the brow,  
The beam to set the light aglow  
And to enrose the pinnacled snow ;

X.

' I am the crimson of the rose,  
The fair quick flame the crocus shows,  
The spice that with the blossom goes,

' The witchery of the thrush's tune,  
The surge of March, the flash of June,  
The marvel of the reapers' moon,

' And when the winter aches in white  
And mists, I haunt the doubtful light  
Where dwindling suns loom red and bright ;

## XI.

' I am the strength of all the dead,  
The wisdom and the goodlihead  
And pith of what they did and said ;

' I am the beauty that hath stood  
Bodied, like a beatitude,  
In soft calamitous womanhood.

' From the beginning ; and the Rest  
Of Saints am I, and all the blest  
Rapture of bosoms babes have press'd ;



## XII.

'And Man, the spirit and the dust,  
The god that wears the chains, and must  
Be still the creature, and still trust

'He is not wholly fool and slave,  
And live half angel and half knave  
To sup with Death and fat the grave.

'Man that is nothing, yet divine,  
Sifting the creeds for some sure sign  
Hath sureness in a look of mine!'

## To the Moon

LISTEN, O meek-eyed nun, lady Diana,  
Silvery dreamer in star-pavèd courtways,—  
Listen, thou pale, pearly queen of dusk  
    evenings,  
Hear, for another comes with his babble !  
Wilt thou not ? Thou hast heard songs more  
    than many ?  
Nightingales, love-sick youths, maids in woe,  
    poets,  
Have they all sigh'd to thee till thou'rt grown  
    weary ?  
We are all weary : yet bend thou and listen !  
  
Whither thou lookest through hurrying storm-  
    wrack,  
On clamorous torrents that flash in wild valleys  
Whither thou hangest a shimmering sickle  
Over a star on the purples of twilight,

Where thou dost spread lonely lakes with thy  
glory,  
Or steepest the slumbering woodlands in  
argent ;  
At thy still dawn, at thy mystical noontide,  
At thy chill death on the hills of a morning ;  
At all times, and all where, they that behold  
thee,  
Wonder, and love thee, patient, sad beauty !  
Lovely beyond all the fine of expression ;  
Ethereal, faint, thou dost traverse the heavens,  
Rapt, like a soul new come from its trouble ;  
As one that hath sorrow'd a sin into sweetness ;  
Calmed of past passion, chasten'd to sainthood,  
At peace ; yet distraught with the dumb re-  
collection  
Of things that are pass'd and gone from thee  
for ever.

O fairest one! tell me, where dost thou wander?  
Where art thou taken in thy white trances?  
What do they show thee to fill thee with  
grieving?  
Art thou gone back to the mists of thy birth-  
night,

When love broke his heart, and in passions  
of rapture

The nightingale first witch'd thine ear with  
confession ?

Art thou again in the valley called Tempe  
To hunt with the nymphs till the morn shall  
affright ye ?

Or dost thou keep watch on the lone brow of  
Latmos,

Waiting the brown-eyed Endymion's coming ?

Can it be thou dost brood o'er the great  
templed Nilus,

Rememb'ring the revel, the lights and the  
music,

And she that came out from the throng in  
the palace,

And ran all a-tremble across to the shadow  
Of the tomb of the kings ; and him that came  
also ?

Can it be that thou seest one float with her  
lover

Down the dim, glistening, palace-lined reaches  
Out of grey Venice unto bright Belmont ?

Or dost thou remember that night in Verona,

That orchard, the silence, the roses, the  
maiden,—

Thy maiden that spake such sweet words and  
loved wholly,

And lives in the hearts, and is loved of all  
lovers!—

Dost thou remember? Ah, dost thou re-  
member?

All the old gods are dead, all the old glory  
gone!

Pan, or the shepherd, will never more greet  
thee!

Memphis is bowed down in black desolation,  
Those lovers are dust, and the poet that sang  
them;

Thou sittest enthroned in the high realms of  
calmness,

Knowing that pain and great loves and fierce  
yearnings

Have strain'd through the years that sweep  
round thy footstool,

Seeing the triumph, the passing of nations,

Seeing men die, and seeing no further—

Who of us marvels that thou should'st go  
grieving ?

\* \* \* \*

O Moon! O silver Moon! here comes the  
tyrant dawn,  
The stars are died out in thy hall. Thou  
shalt follow,  
Even now thou'rt fading. Farewell! let me  
leave thee,  
Let me go down through the songs of the  
morning,  
And wait in my chamber, thy holy returning,  
Let me dream all thy dreams, and greet all  
thine advènts,  
Till I too am gathered out of the shadows,  
And know all the ways of the vasty hereafter.

## Philomel

THE red rose said to me,  
    'Be thou my Love ;  
    Lo, I am fire and flame  
For love of thee !'

I said to the red rose,  
    ' It is in starry white,  
    With brows and breasts of snow,  
That my Love goes.'

## For a Poet

IT shall suffice if one swift word  
Of thine, the living faith hath stirr'd  
In one sick soul when faith was blurr'd.

And if, upon the tilth of pain,  
Thou rearest one earful of the grain  
Of Power, that men may sow again

To keep the seed of Paradise ;  
Though thou be broken, sere, and thrice  
Blasted by Fate, it shall suffice.



## The Lost Song

'O SHEPHERD, wherefore singest thou ?'  
The white mists crept down the valley,  
The red dawn burn'd and brake into day,  
As he carolled away in the mountains.

'Ah !' said the crone, 'he is happy,  
That singer there in the mists,  
Hearken now to his music,—  
Wild and sweet as the mirth of the tossing lark!  
Dear heart ! it might have been April,  
Lilting some catch of gladness  
Wherewith to quicken the world.'

Long echoed the magical notes, long and  
clearly ;  
But they died away, ere the mists were done,

Into the summer silence ;  
And all the wide, blue valley  
Slept in bloom and in noontide.

‘ Hush ! ’ she said, ‘ he has finished—  
He grows tired even of singing ;  
Ay, well ! it is only mortal  
To weary of things immortal :  
Yet he cannot rest long—yonder singer ;  
He is young, and his life is pleasant ;  
Age hath no heart to make music ;  
No hope nor faith that should waken  
Into sweet sounds. Age is songless ;  
Youth sings, and cannot help it.’

She waited, and listen'd and waited ;  
Round the bloom the wild bee murmur'd,  
Three fluted notes came to her from the pine  
wood,  
Across the summer silence ;  
But the wild singer of the mountains  
Sang no more in her hearing,  
And the wonder of his singing  
Faded through long remembrance,  
Till it died and was lost and forgotten.

There were dawns and golden lapses of day ;  
Wild, wonderful sunsets, glorified nights,  
Haunted of dreams and quiet, and the moon.  
There were storms, long rains and lightning,  
Swift floods and starless mirk,  
And the roar and white of the winter.

One night in the black December,  
When the mad wind howl'd in the pine woods,  
And the valley was blind with snow,  
She crouch'd by a dying fire,  
Dreaming she looked down the mists of her  
years.

And anon she smiled and anon she wept  
At what she saw in her fancies :  
And she wept more than she smiled.

The mad wind cried in the pine wood,  
The cold snow drifted in at the lintel  
And through the chinks and the crannies  
Of her hut, on the lonely hillside.  
But above the roar of the wind,  
Like a far-off sound from a sunnier world,  
That song of the mists and the morning  
Came suddenly on her ear ;  
And she went out into the night,  
And stood in the storm and listened.

The dawn flash'd over the mountain tops ;  
The lark shot up in the warm blue sky ;  
Bloom and summer slept in the valley.  
She stepped forth into the dawning,  
With a song on her lips and joy in her heart ;  
And the lonely hut on the hill-side,  
And the dark merciless winter  
Knew her no more, for she travelled  
Through the halls of the dawn, beyond them.

## The Yeoman

ACROSS the counties came the sound  
Of war-drums that his fathers knew ;  
He had no heart for horse or hound,  
He said, ' Am I not English too ? '

All the old ardours in his blood  
Leapt like the flame from smitten steel,  
And, to himself revealed, he stood  
A buttress of the commonweal.

So that, if cities give their pride  
To strengthen England's righteous arm,  
Men, too, are bred by countryside  
And quiet grange and folded farm.

## ‘ Crossing the Bar ’

I MAY not live as he lived, grand and pure,  
Nor die as he died in the grey moonlight,  
Laurel'd and loved and absolutely sure  
Of calms more calm than compassed him  
that night.

But, at the end of travail, I shall chance  
To where those wan ships be,  
And go aboard without much circumstance,  
And so put forth to sea.

The bar will moan, the bitter foam-flake fly  
Blindly along the dark,  
And no one pace the shore to say good-bye  
When I embark.

And, for the Pilot—may His arm be strong  
To bear my frail craft far  
Beyond the shoal of being, and the long  
Sad moaning of the bar.

## Audrey

AUDREY knoweth naught of books,  
Naught to captivate the wise :  
But the soul of goodness looks  
Through the quiet of her eyes.

She can bake and she can knit,  
Cunningly she wields the broom,  
All her pleasure is to sit  
In a neatly order'd room . . . .

Touchstone, shaping a career,  
Shines at each exclusive house :—  
' Such a clever man, my dear,  
' Tied to—just " a country mouse ! "

' Married ere he dreamed of us,  
Ere he knew what gifts he had—  
Strange that Fate should yoke him thus,  
And very, very, very sad ! '

Touchstone (let them mark it well)—  
When the social round is trod,  
Bored by dame and demoiselle—  
Goes home softly, praising God.





*At the Sign of The Unicorn.*

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